

August
2013



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

RainScapes Gazette

RainScapes Rewards

If you're looking for some help in designing or installing a RainScape, look no further than our updated [Landscape Professionals List](#).

This list is comprised of landscape professionals who have taken courses through the RainScapes landscape professionals training series. Our courses cover the RainScapes Rewards Rebate program including the application process, individual rebate requirements, and pertinent construction information.

The list details the number and type of RainScapes rebate projects and the types of rebate projects that each landscape professional has completed. The list is now sorted based on rebate projects that have been completed and paid.

If you're a landscape professional and interested in taking a training course, we announce them in our [RainScapes for Landscape Professionals Gazette](#).

The RainScapes program now has its own [Facebook page](#)! Please visit us to find informative posts on different water quality related topics. Feel free to post any questions you may have.

RainScapes.org



What's Wrong With My Soil!?

Are your native plants failing to thrive in your garden? Are you asking yourself "I thought these plants were supposed to be adapted to this environment?" One of the possible culprits could be your soil pH.

Soil pH measures the level of acidity or basicity in soils. It ranges from 0

to 14 with 7 being neutral. A pH below 7 is acidic and above 7 is basic.

Many of our native plants are known as acidophiles, which means that they need a soil pH that is more acidic than basic. Most vegetables like a more neutral pH, so

recommendations for vegetables do not apply for native plants. If soils are not acidic enough, nutrients in the soil are not available for native plants to use so they struggle or die.

Foundations, concrete walks and lime spread on a lawns may



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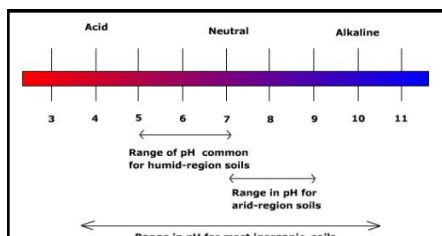
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What's Wrong With My Soil!? Continued

contribute to a soil pH that is too basic for our native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers. Most composts that are sold are pH balanced making them neutral. These composts are better suited for vegetables so if you use them



for native plants you may need to add a soil acidifier at the same time. It is always a good idea to check your pH in the Fall and Spring before you decide how to amend your soils. This can be done with a pH meter that probes the soil and tells you the pH immediately. Local garden centers carry pH probes and products like sulfur that are appropriate for adjusting soil pH. These products are usually labeled as "good for hollies and evergreen shrubs and acid-loving plants".



Featured RainScape: A Beautiful Conservation Landscape

A [conservation landscape](#) is a garden that utilizes native plants to control stormwater and benefits wildlife. Native plants have deep roots that help increase the ability of soil to soak up water. Not only does it soak up rain water but it also provides food and shelter for many native animals.

In this specific conservation landscape turf was replaced with a garden. What used to be an area with little water absorption and a lot of run off is now a beautiful and functional garden adding curb appeal, benefitting our streams and wildlife .



Before



After

Tree Tip: "Fall Mulching"

Fall is a great time to mulch your trees. But its important to make sure you do it correctly

When mulching you want to maintain 3" of mulch, not add 3" to your tree. Too much mulch can harm the tree.

A good rule to remember is the 3-3-3 rule which is to maintain 3" of mulch in a 3' foot circle around the tree with the mulch being at least 3" away from the trunk of the tree

The incorrect way to add mulch



"Mulch Volcano"

The correct way to add mulch



"Mulch Donut"

Booze Creek Stream Restoration

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recently finished a [stream restoration project along lower Booze Creek](#) between River Road and the Cabin John Parkway.

This stream restoration project, identified as a top priority stream restoration project in the Cabin John Watershed, is a 0.8 mile project focusing on establishing a stable

stream channel, improving aquatic habitat, protecting water and sewer infrastructure, removing invasive vines and reforesting 3.5 acres of riparian buffer.

This stream restoration is one of the county's [many efforts](#) to help control stormwater runoff from over 4,300 acres of impervious area by 2015.



My Green Montgomery

The [My Green Montgomery website](#) has gone through a major overhaul. The new up-to-date site has information on how to make Montgomery County a safer, healthier, more sustainable place to live.

Why should we "Green" Montgomery County? There's a good reason for

everyone. For some, it's to preserve our natural beauty. For others, it's to reduce our carbon footprint and live more sustainably. And for others, it's about saving "green" money every day. Whatever your reason, you'll find information and resources throughout this site to reach your green goals.

Guest writers are wanted for the My Green Montgomery blog! If you have

an interesting environmental story to share, email it to

Jessica.Jones@montgomerycountymd.gov



Don't Cut Back Those Seed Heads!

The aesthetic appeal of a garden doesn't just come from the plants. It can also come from the wildlife that your garden attracts. Keep this in mind when you're looking at your coneflowers after they're done blooming. If you don't cut off the seed heads then you will get some lovely wildlife visitors in fall.



[The Goldfinch \(*Carduelis tristis*\)](#) is one of many birds that loves to eat the seeds of coneflowers. It is a granivore, which means it's adapted for the consumption of seeds, with a conical beak to remove the seeds and agile feet to grip the stems of seedheads while feeding.



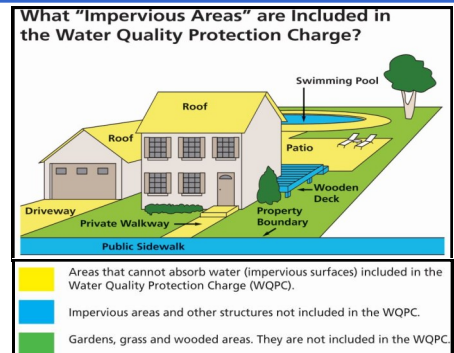
Water Quality Protection Charge

The [Water Quality Protection Charge \(WQPC\)](#) can be found on your Montgomery County property tax bill. The WQPC, which is required by the State of Maryland, funds projects to minimize stormwater pollution, protect property and infrastructure, and restore our rivers and streams.

The WQPC is [calculated](#) based on the potential for a property to

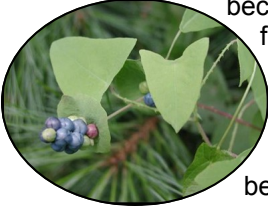
contribute to stormwater pollution. The bigger, more developed a property, the higher the WQPC.

Property owners can [reduce their WQPC](#), and at the same time, help prevent stormwater pollution. By installing stormwater management practices such as eligible [RainScapes projects](#)



Invasive Plant of Concern

[Mile-a-Minute \(*Polygonum perfoliatum*\)](#) is one of the most hated invasive plants. It is an annual thorny vine that rapidly covers native vegetation. This plant got its name because of how fast it spreads.



This plant is also called "Tear Thumb" because of the

pain gardeners received due to its razor like thorns.

Mile-a-Minute has blue-green triangular leaves with dark blue berries. The berries can be spread by birds and flowing water like streams. Since it's an annual, effective eradication requires removal before the plant can produce berries. This plant can be removed fairly easy but use of gloves is highly recommended.



Native Plant Of Interest

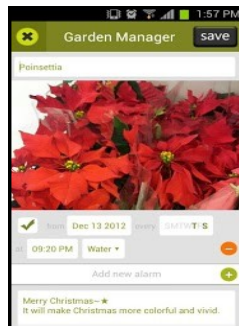
[Green Headed Coneflower \(*Rudbeckia laciniata*\)](#) is one of our largest native perennials. This cousin of the Black-eyed Susan can reach heights of 10 feet! Blooming occurs in late summer and the seed heads will attract gold finches and other birds in fall. It requires full to partial sun and can handle both wet and dry conditions. It's aggressive so plant it where you don't mind it spreading.



App. and Book of Interest

App. of Interest

[Garden Manager](#) is the ideal application for gardeners who have trouble remembering all the things they need to do in the garden. With this app you can set reminders for tasks you plan on doing in the future but often forget.

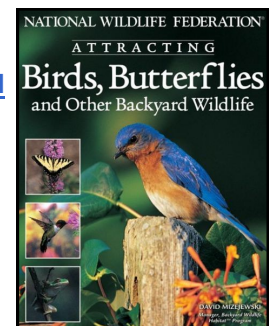


Book of Interest:

[Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife](#)

provides step-by-step projects for families to do together, making getting back to nature easy, educational, and fun.

ISBN # 1580111505



Events of Interest: Montgomery County Agricultural Fair

Visit the Department of Environmental Protection at the [Montgomery County Agricultural Fair](#) Friday, August 9 through Saturday, August 17, 2013!

The Department of Environmental Protection will have an information booth across from the Chilly mall during of the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair.

During Family Days we will have a variety of bugs for kids to learn about the creatures that live in our waters. Family days will be on Monday, August 12 and Wednesday, August 14 .

Other days of interest include Senior Citizen's Day on Tuesday, August 13 and Military Day on Thursday, August 15 .

Watershed groups will be available to share information about their activities on the following days:

- Friday, August 9 from 3pm to 9pm Rock Creek Conservancy
- Saturday, August 10 from 10am to 2pm Muddy Branch Alliance
- Sunday, August 11 from 10am to 2pm Seneca Creek Watershed Partners